

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 11015 141312Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 H-02 CPR-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SAM-01

/051 W

----- 065385

R 141055Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 632

INFO USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 11015

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR,OVIP,IN,US(FORD, GERALD)

SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS COVERAGE ON PRESIDENT FORD'S

DELHI VISIT

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE INDIAN PRESS GAVE CONSIDERABLE NEWS COVERAGE TO PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT TO DELHI. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS LIMITED. SOME ANALYSTS SAW THE CANCELLATION OF THE TRIP AS A "SET-BACK" TO INDO-U.S. RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NEWS HAS GENERATED FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE IN THE LEADING NEWSPAPERS. AUGUST 12 NEWS TREATMENT QUOTED NEWSWEEK'S "PERISCOPE" SECTION OF THE AUGUST 18 ISSUE ON THE SUBJECT, BUT DELETED THE MAGAZINE'S OBSERVATION THAT THE VISIT HAS BEEN SCRUBBED "IN VIEW OF INDIRA GANDHI'S MOVES TOWARD DICTATORSHIP."

2. NEWS COVERAGE ON AUGUST 13 WAS BASED ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BYLINER BY BERNARD GWERTZMAN, HIGHLIGHTING TWO POINTS: WASHINGTON CONFIRMS PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT POSTPONED AND MR. FORD ALSO CANCELS VISIT TO PAKISTAN. QUOTING "INFORMED SOURCES" FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, ACCOUNTS ADDED INDIA "HAS NO INFORMATION IF PRESIDENT FORD HAD PUT OFF HIS VISIT."

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3. TODAY'S PAPERS UNDERSCORE THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAS

DROPPED INDIA VISIT ON DR KISSINGER'S ADVICE NOT TO VISIT A COUNTRY WHERE A STATE OF EMERGENCY IS IN FORCE. THE STATESMAN LED FRONT-PAGE STORY WITH TWO-DECK HEADLINES: "FORD CANCELS INDIA VISIT. DECISION ON ADVICE OF KISSINGER." REPORTS WERE BASED ON UNI, QUOTING DPA. THEY ALSO NOTED THAT DELHI SOURCES "REPEATED" THAT THEY HAD "NO OFFICIAL INFORMATION" ABOUT THE CANCELLATION OF THE VISIT.

4. MOST EDITORIAL TREATMENT DECLARED THAT THE REPORTED CANCELLATION WOULD CAUSE A "SET-BACK" TO INDO-U.S. RELATIONS. TODAY'S INDIAN EXPRESS CARRIED A TYPICAL COMMENT....IT WILL INDOUBTEDLY CAUSE A GREAT SET-BACK TO HOPES OF AN EARLY IMPROVEMENT IN INDO U.S. RELATIONS." WRITING ALONG SIMILAR LINES, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (AUGUST 12) SAW THE DEVELOPMENT AS "AN UNFORTUNATE SET-BACK" TO "HOPEFUL TRENDS" IN INDO-U.S. RELATIONS. THE INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE, OF CHANDIGARH, COMMENTED AUGUST 13 THAT WASHINGTON'S DECISION "MARKS A SET-BACK TO THE RECENT EFFORTS TO RESTORE CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES."

5. TWO NEWSPAPERS EXPRESSED OTHER VIEWPOINTS, IN A SECOND EDITORIAL, "NO GREAT LOSS," TODAY'S TIME OF INDIA STRESSED THAT THE FORD VISIT WAS "A BY-PRODUCT OF THE MISSION TO CHINA" AND THEREFORE "NOT MUCH IMPORTANCE NEED TO BE ATTACHED TO THE POSTPONEMENT.." PRO-MOSCOW PATRIOT LEAD EDITORIAL, "FORD'S NON-VISIT," BLAMED AUGUST 13 WASHINGTON OFFICIALS FOR "CAREFULLY ARRANGING LEAK" TO THE NEWSWEEK, AND HELD THAT "THE U.S. HAD NOT GIVEN UP HOPE THAT IT WOULD BE ABLE TO BRING INDIA TO HEEL." IN FURTHER COMMENT, IT JUDGED THAT THE CANCELLATION OF THE VISIT "WILL NOT CAUSE MUCH REGRET ANYWHERE IN INDIA." SAXBE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE11015
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750281-0232
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750853/aaaabudn.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 FEB 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 FEB 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <02 FEB 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN PRESS COVERAGE ON PRESIDENT FORD'S DELHI VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, IN, US, (FORD, GERALD R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006